DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 449 469 CS 014 225

TITLE	The Librarians' Reading Renaissance[R] Survey. Report.
INSTITUTION	School Renaissance Inst., Inc., Madison, WI.
PUB DATE	1999-08-00
NOTE	6p.; School Renaissance Institute, Inc., was formerly the Institute for Academic Excellence, Inc.
AVAILABLE FROM	School Renaissance Institute, P.O. Box 45016, Madison, WI 53744-5016. Tel: 800-200-4848 (Toll Free); Fax: 608-664-3882; Web site: http://www.SchoolRenaissance.com.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; Job Satisfaction; *Librarian Attitudes; *Media Specialists; Reading Habits; Reading Skills; *School Libraries; Student Improvement
IDENTIFIERS	Accelerated Reader Program; *Reading Renaissance

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted which surveyed Reading Renaissance Model (RR) certified librarians (of 112 surveys sent, 49 responded). The survey requested demographic information and asked attitudinal questions about how RR has affected students' reading habits and librarian job satisfaction. Also solicited was circulation and funding information for the year prior to, and the first five years after, Accelerated Reader implementation. According to responses received, the Reading Renaissance program has a very favorable impact upon students' reading habits, reading skill levels, and librarian job satisfaction. Furthermore these librarians report a 343% increase in library circulation and a 254% increase in library funding; many of them believe that the library has become the focal point of their schools. Renaissance media professionals also see students discussing books with each other and taking an active interest in recommending books for the library's collection. Additionally, these librarians and media specialists indicated that their jobs have become much more rewarding because students are actually reading and enjoying it. (Contains unnumbered tables, charts, and graphs of data.) (NKA)

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The Librarians' Reading Renaissance Survey.

Report

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REPORT from the Institute for Academic Excellence

THE INSTITUTE for ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

August 1999

The Librarians' Reading Renaissance® Survey

The following study presents the results of a survey of Reading Renaissance Model Certified librarians. According to responses received, the Reading Renaissance program has a very favorable impact upon students' reading habits, reading skill levels, and librarian job satisfaction. Furthermore, these librarians report a 343 percent increase in library circulation and a 254 percent increase in library funding, and many now believe that the library has become the focal point of their schools. Renaissance media professionals also see students discussing books with each other and taking an active interest in recommending books for the library's collection. Most importantly, these librarians and media specialists indicate that their jobs have become much more rewarding because students are actually reading and loving it.

The Reading Renaissance Librarian Benefits Survey

The survey was sent in November 1998 to 112 librarians and media specialists who had achieved Reading Renaissance (RR) Model Certification by October 1, 1998. These are specialists who have received Reading Renaissance Professional Development training and have provided data demonstrating successful implementation of Renaissance techniques. The survey requested demographic information and asked attitudinal questions about how RR has affected students' reading habits and librarian job satisfaction. Several open-ended questions provided librarians with opportunities to comment on the effectiveness of the Reading Renaissance program. Additionally, the survey solicited circulation and funding information for the year prior to, and the first five years after, Accelerated Reader® (AR™) implementation. A total of 49 (44 percent) of the 112 Renaissance librarians and media specialists responded to the survey.

A. Demographic Information

Renaissance librarians and media professionals from 49 elementary and middle schools in 16 states responded to the survey. The average enrollment of these schools was 571 students, and enrollment ranged from 225 to 1,100 students.

The Renaissance librarians reported using the Accelerated Reader program over a wide range of years. The following table shows a frequency distribution of the number of years AR has been used by 47 librarians who responded to this portion of the survey.
(See page 2.)

Years of Accelerated Reader Usage Among Renaissance Librarians

Years of AR Usage	Responses	Percent of Total
2	1	2.1%
3	11	23.5%
4	11	23.5%
5	6	12.8%
6	6	12.8%
7	4	8.3%
8	3	6.4%
9	3	6.4%
10	1	2.1%
11	1	2.1%
TOTAL	**47**	**100.0%**

Mean = 5.2 years of AR usage
Standard Deviation = 2.2 years
Range = 2.0 to 11.0 years

Forty-eight Renaissance librarians indicated how long they have served as media specialists at their current schools. Outlined below is a distribution of the number of years each librarian has held her current position.

Renaissance Librarian Tenure in Current Positions

Years at Current Position	Responses	Percent of Total
At least 1, but less than 3	6	12.5%
At least 3, but less than 5	8	16.8%
At least 5, but less than 7	9	18.8%
At least 7, but less than 9	7	14.3%
At least 9, but less than 11	5	10.4%
At least 11, but less than 16	4	8.4%
At least 16, but less than 22	5	10.4%
22 years or more	4	8.4%
TOTAL	**48**	**100.0%**

Mean = 8.8 years/current position
Standard Deviation = 6.8 years
Range = 1.0 to 27.0 years

B. Survey Results

1. Answers to Yes/No Questions

In response to many of the survey questions where either a yes/no response or an estimated figure was required, the following results were obtained:

1. **Ninety-six percent** of Renaissance librarians agree that students discuss their books more.
2. AR is used with an average of **94 percent** of the students in the Renaissance librarians' schools.
3. Renaissance librarians report that, on average, **44 percent** of their collections are AR books.
4. **Thirty-five percent** of Renaissance librarians report that participation in statewide reading programs has increased.
5. The survey also revealed these figures about Renaissance librarians:
   - **55 percent** have used the AR BookGuide™ computerized book search and library development tool.
   - **67 percent** have ordered customized quiz disks.
   - **31 percent** subscribe to AR-NET listserv.
   - **57 percent** are the Reading Renaissance (RR) coordinators in their schools.
   - **65 percent** still teach instructional classes for library skills.
   - **90 percent** use flexible scheduling or a form of flexible scheduling in their libraries.

2. Attitudinal Statements

Each Renaissance librarian was asked for her level of agreement with five separate statements. The levels of agreement were formatted on a Likert Scale ranging from 5 for "Strongly Agree" to 1 for "Strongly Disagree." All 49 respondents provided information for this section of the survey; however, one respondent did not address all five statements. The percent of favorable responses was calculated for each statement and for the overall attitude of each respondent. A favorable response is defined as any response equal to or greater than "4" (Agree).

Each statement started with the following lead:

With the adoption of Accelerated Reader and the implementation of Reading Renaissance:

	Percent Favorable
1. Students have more access to the library outside of scheduled class time.	98.0%
2. Students are encouraged to read books their friends have read.	96.0%
3. I have become a more effective librarian/media specialist.	85.7%
4. My job is more enjoyable.	83.6%
5. Students check out better quality books (more hard cover and fewer paperback).	79.2%

Overall attitudes for each respondent were measured with the average score for each respondent's answers. As shown by the data above, Renaissance librarians agree with all five statements about the effectiveness of Reading Renaissance in their schools. Almost 80 percent have overall response averages of 4.0 or greater, indicating a generally favorable attitude about the impact of Reading Renaissance.

One of the open-ended questions asked for factors considered in collection-development procedures the librarians used in their schools. The 48 responses were categorized and tallied. Most librarians provided answers that fit into several categories.

Question: **What factors do you consider in collection development?**

	Responses
1. AR quiz available for the book.	26
2. Students' reading-level needs.	25
3. Books needed to support curriculum.	18
4. Students' interests and recommendations.	15
5. Teacher recommendations/requests.	13
6. Balance of fiction and nonfiction.	8
7. Update materials and quality of selection.	2
Total =	**107**

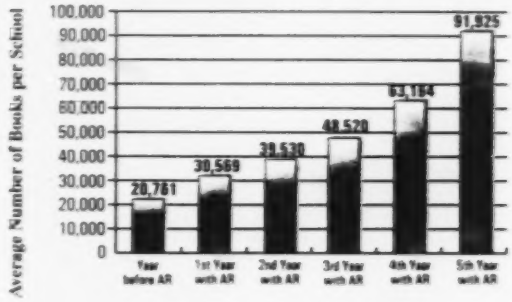
3. Library Circulation and Funding Increases

Each librarian was asked to provide circulation and funding information for the year before Accelerated Reader was implemented through the first five years of AR implementation. Nine Renaissance librarians provided complete information about circulation and/or funding. The following charts show the dramatic increases in both library circulation and library funding.

RENAISSANCE MODEL LIBRARY CIRCULATION

(Sample of nine schools)

Model Library Circulation Increases 343 Percent Over Five Years of Accelerated Reader Usage

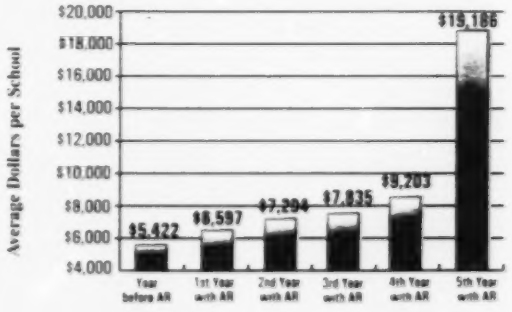


Years of Accelerated Reader Usage

RENAISSANCE MODEL LIBRARY FUNDING

(Sample of nine schools)

Model Library Funding Increases 254 Percent Over Five Years of Accelerated Reader Usage



Years of Accelerated Reader Usage

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4. Written Responses

Approximately 96 percent of the 49 Renaissance librarians provided written responses to the following request:

What is the most positive experience you have had with AR and RR?

All of the responses have been categorized, and librarian responses have been tallied for each category. Many librarians provided information covering several topics. The top five categories reported by each librarian are listed below in a frequency distribution of written responses.

	Responses	Percent of Total
1. Seeing kids actually read and enjoy it/complete change of reading habits.	26	36.6%
2. Students' reading levels and test scores improve.	16	22.5%
3. Seeing students LOVE to read.	14	19.7%
4. Kids talking about books with each other.	8	11.3%
5. Library is now the focal point of school/increased use.	7	9.9%
Total Responses =	**71**	**100.0%**

Conclusions

According to the survey results, Renaissance librarians and media specialists nationwide believe that Reading Renaissance implementation has a very positive impact on their schools' libraries and on students' reading habits. Many Renaissance media specialists have seen dramatic increases in library circulation and funding and report that the library has become the nucleus of the school. These librarians and media specialists have also noted a significant change in their students, who are discussing books with each other and even recommending books for the library's collection. Most importantly, those surveyed emphasize that their jobs are much more enjoyable and rewarding because students are actually reading and loving it.

For more information, or for additional copies of this report, write or call:

The Institute for Academic Excellence
P. O. Box 45016
Madison, WI 53744-5016
(800) 200-4848

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